

**District of Columbia Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, April 18, 2018**

Attendance

Commissioners: Carolyn Nicholas, Chairwoman; Guleford Bobo, Vice Chairman; Barbara Hair; John Giacomini; Barbara Lee; Marguerite Pridgen; Mary Taylor

Members of the Public: John Donnelly (FEMS); Sally White (IONA); Ashlea Steiner (IONA)

D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) Staff Present: Laura Newland, Executive Director; Garret King, Chief of Staff; Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager, Alexis Griffin, Director of Finance

I. Call to Order

Carolyn Nicholas (Chairwoman) called the meeting to order at approximately 10:18 a.m.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes from the Commission's March 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved as they were.

III. Presentations

D.C. Office on Aging Update

Executive Director Laura Newland (Director) gave a brief overview a budget slide deck that shows the Mayor's investments and FY19 budget. Due to public feedback, this is the first year the Mayor's talks about seniors separately. The overall proposed budget increased a little over 1% from FY18 to FY19, and DCOA's proposed budget increased over 4%.

The Director pointed out funding for investments in Community Support

- Safe at Home program received \$4.5M, an increase from FY18
- A program that will cut in half the amount real property tax can increase from year to year, for qualified households
- Grant funds for people who live in historic homes for repairs and rehabilitation
- 50 new housing units for low-income senior women through DHS
- \$2M for Transport DC

Capital Investments

- Wards 5 and 8 received expansion money. DCOA will be working with DGS to scope out the work this summer
- Caregiver Center in Ward 7
- Ward 8 will receive 11.4 million for a new facility. DCOA's vision for the facility is that it is city-wide, not another wellness center, centered around holistic living and health. The center will have programming and employment opportunities for seniors 60+. Programming developed and driven by District seniors.

The Director introduced DCOA's new Resource Allocations Officer, Alexis Griffin. Alexis came from the Mayor's budget office.

Commissioner Giacomini asked if the "caring for caregivers" program was unique to DC; the Director said that the site has not been named yet, but to her knowledge, no other jurisdiction that focuses on self-care for unpaid caregivers and a facility specifically for caregivers. This is a partnership with DPR.

Vice Chair Bobo asked if the historic grant fell under DCOA, Director responded that it did not.

Deputy Fire Chief John Donnelly

Deputy Fire Chief John Donnelly discussed the Right Care, Right Now program. The program began due to people using the 911 system for non-emergencies, which causes stress to the system. The system is not only 911 call systems, it affects the emergency rooms, rehab facilities, etc. It is designed to help people get the care they need at the right time, and increase the resources available for people with critical emergencies. Per capita, DC has the busiest EMS system in the Nation. They run about 220,000 calls per year, roughly 500 calls per day, 265 of those calls results in transport to the emergency room; a lot of those transports are "low acuity," meaning they need medical care but not emergency care.

The system is designed to help who need medical care get to the hospital without using emergency services. The new system will begin on Friday, April 20th. When appropriate, people will be able to speak to a nurse who can try to get you an appointment with a doctor or clinic and transportation to and from the appointment, instead of being sent to the emergency room. The impact should initially be invisible; they will be starting with about ten people per day. They would like to hear all feedback, even it is "they took me to a clinic, but I sat in the clinic for eight hours before anyone saw me," so they can improve.

Commissioner Giacomini asked how many calls a day they might get because they are open all day; Deputy Chief clarified that the initial rollout hours stop at 11 pm, because the clinics close. They don't want to see an increase in calls.

Commissioner Giacomini asked if there was one number; Deputy Donnelly responded 911.

Commissioner Hair asked to take her through the process if she called about heart pains; for that you would not be sent to the nurse triage line you'd be taken straight to the emergency room. He gave the example of stubbing your toe. The process: you'd be transferred to the nurse line, the nurse will ask you a series of questions about your condition, ask about insurance, if you currently have a doctor, a list of clinics close to your house, then the nurse will call a clinic to set an appointment, then they would arrange roundtrip transportation.

Commissioner Hair who will transport you to the clinic; presently Lyft.

Garret King asked about Frequent Flyers, people who use the system a lot. There is another program to work that population.

Chairwoman asked what if they find out she has a doctor that could not see her that day, could this program help; No.

Chairwoman asked if the program was only for seniors; no the system is for everyone. It is not targeted at any particular group but will help people who do not have great access to healthcare.

Chairwoman asked what needs to homeless have; a lot the calls they receive are not from the homeless, it is from people who are concerned.

Chairwoman asked what does FEMS do for people with mental illness; currently, they enter the system through the emergency room. If someone does not want help, there are a few instances where they are held involuntarily with the help of MPD; those are the exception rather than the rule. They are connected to mental health services through the emergency room or the Street Calls program.

Sally White asked what older adults are calling for; not sure of the statistics

Sally White asked about Comfort Care; FEMS honors, understands, and respects DNR orders. It's part of EMT training.

Deputy Donnelly informed everyone to call 311 to set up an appointment to have them installed. 202-673-3320 is the number to the Fire Chief's Office.

Commissioner Lee asked if FEMS answers medical alerts calls; yes, it depends on the alarm company.

DC has a small number of fire deaths, but most fire deaths are senior citizens.

Commissioner Hair asked what are the causes of senior fires; mostly accidental.

Chairwoman why does DC have the highest demand; it's per capita, but a lot has to do with our system developed over the years, now 911 has become the answer.

Chairwoman asked if neighborhood health clinics should be re-established; yes.

Senior Advisory Coalition (SAC)

Sally White introduced herself as the executive director for IONA for the past nine years. IONA has been DCOA's lead agency in Ward 3 since 1982. SAC was established about ten years ago to help seniors be heard and get their needs better known. SAC focuses on nutrition service, housing, transportation, case management, and services in the home.

For FY19 SAC will advocate for various items in the budget. Their focus will be broader than DCOA such as working with DPR, DOH, housing, etc.

Transportation: SAC will advocate for \$1.5 million capital funding for replacement vehicles, so older vehicles won't get pulled off the road before Seabury gets a replacement.

Food Access: Was pushing DHCF to include meals under the EPD Waiver, instead of DCOA paying for those meetings; however after speaking with them they are pulling that request. DHCF informed the Long Term Care Coalition that DC is spending more money per person for people on the waiver than people in nursing homes. The federal government has a rule that you cannot spend more money on the at-home services than you spend on nursing homes services per person per year.

SAC is thinking of asking for an additional nutritionist at lead agency to focus on nutrition counseling, oversight of the home delivered meals program, and enrolling people in the supplements program.

Social Work case management services saves lives. SAC would advocate for more social workers in Wards 7 & 8.

Sally asked for feedback from the Commission about what SAC could advocate for, for housing other than more money for the trust.

Chairwoman suggested utilizing Walter Reed for affordable housing; possibly the old hospital could be converted to housing for low to moderate income residents. There is currently low income housing being built on Georgia Avenue that is currently taking applications.

Commissioner Lee asked if Meals on Wheels was a part of SAC's request; Sally responded that DCOA seems to currently have enough money for meals. She gave a brief overview of DCOA's meals program.

Commissioner Hair is not sure that seniors at Congress Heights are aware of supplements; Sally recommended that they talk to their lead agency.

Vice Chair Bobo said he spoke with CM Trayon White's liaison and requested more social workers.

Vice Chair Bobo stated CM Nadeau at DCOA's performance hearing spoke about development in Ward 1 slotted for senior housing. He is trying to determine what the difference was between senior housing and affordable housing.

Chairwoman said CM Todd mentioned that there is low income senior housing being developed at Walter Reed.

Chairwoman shared the request she may possibly testify for at the budget hearing:

- Citywide Needs Assessment to identify seniors who are not being served and who is being but not getting everything they need; which fits in with CM Todd's 10 – year plan.
- Make DCOA a department, to be model after the Maryland Department on Aging. The chairwoman explained that an office is an appendage of are larger organization or group; where a department is responsible planning, managing, delivery, etc. A department will stand out as a premiere agency.
- Case management for everybody to be employed by DCOA.
- Information and education campaign to keep District seniors informed.
- Authorize DCOA to conduct an Elder Abuse Public Information campaign.
- Enforcement of the Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults and the Elderly Amendment Act.
- Financial assistance for seniors who do not have sufficient funds to meet the cost of living.
- Permanent appropriate shelter for homeless seniors.
- Expanded services including transportation
- Wellness Center in wards 2 and 3
- Services for blind and legally impaired.
- Expanded parking – currently no parking at Bernice; possibly designate parking on the street for attendees.

Vice Chair Bobo informed the Commission about a “Learn, Lunch and Crunch” in Ward 8 on May 25th. Seniors will be educated on scams and things to avoid.

Commissioner Bobo asked if one year is the normal time for people to wait to receive the EPD waiver; Sally White informed that was the testimony that was received but DCOA and DHCF was working to reduce that time.

Commissioner Pridgen informed the group the CM Gray introduced legislation to eliminate taxes for certain seniors. Suggested that SAC focus on anything that help with staying in the home. Asked if SAC had a viewpoint on the capital improvements; thinks it is great to have more capital improvements geared to seniors, they would like to have input in the caregiver center.

Sally invited the Commissioners to SACs advocacy day on April 30th.

Ashlea Steiner asked how do you advocate for a needs assessment and get it done well, does the Commission have a strategy; Chairwoman said to ask for money to hire a contractor to get one done.

IV. Committee Reports

Governance: No Chair

Elder Abuse and Financial Exploitation: Chairwoman informed the Commission that the Office of the Attorney General is working with the US Attorney General's Office to get a prosecutor to prosecute elder abuse crimes. Also, Detective Vincent Tucci has been asked to chair the Age Friendly City Public Safety committee.

Transportation: No update

Housing: No update

Health and Wellness: Vice Chair visited seniors who have received in-home and found that they have been language barriers. Commission Pridgen pointed out that it may be due to heavy accents.

V. Ward Reports

Wards 1, 2, 5, and 6 did not have reports.

Ward 3 – Commissioners Giacomini and Pridgen presented at the ANC 3B04 meeting. They handed out demographics, the mission of COA, a list of Commissioners, a few goals of 2018, upcoming possibilities for testifying, informed them about mini-commissions, the Commissions letter to Laura about the underserved, and information about the Ambassador's program.

Commissioner Pridgen also presented at to the Citizen's advisory group, established by IONA.

Ward 4 – The chairwoman reported that there is a dynamite mini-commission in Ward 4. Encouraged everyone to start mini-commission in their ward. Giacomini reported he has spoken to Arnstein about starting a mini-commission in Ward 2.

Ward 7 – Commissioner Taylor reported that Ward 7 mini-commission will meet in May.

Ward 8 – Vice Chair informed the Commission that Ashley Bailey is the new director for the Ward 8 Lead agency. He and Commissioner Hair will meet with director to establish a new relationship.

New Business

Chairwoman is scheduling a meeting with the Mayor and requested Commissioners to vote on the priorities she should focus her discussion. The Commission voted for her to focus on:

- Goal 1: City Wide Needs Assessment
- Goal 2: Information and education campaign
- Goal 3: Elder Abuse public information campaign

- Goal 5: Make DCOA a department

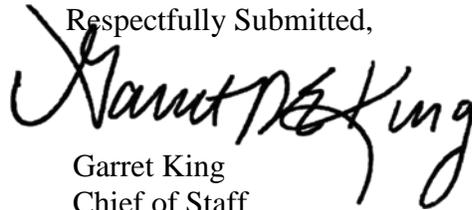
The Chairwoman encouraged Commissioners to testify at the budget hearing, focusing on what is important for their ward.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 PM.

These minutes were recorded by Garret King, Chief of Staff, Office on Aging, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on May 23, 2018.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garret King". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Garret King
Chief of Staff
District of Columbia Office on Aging